

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15

RSR-01 /065 W

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R 021541Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 493

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA AIRWAYS AND TWA

1. IN RECENT WEEKS LAGOS PRESS, AND PARTICULARLY NEW NIGERIAN, HAS DEVOTED INCREASING ATTENTION TO NIGERIA AIRWAYS. ARTICLES NOT NECESSARILY CONSISTENT BUT COMMON FOCUS HAS BEEN ON NIGERIA AIRWAYS' PROBLEMS AND FAILINGS AND IN THAT CONTEXT THERE HAVE BEEN RECURRING REFERENCES TO POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENT WITH TWA.

2. MAIN POINT OF PRESS REFERENCES TO TWA HAS BEEN THAT REPORT CONTAINING TWA PROPOSALS STILL UNDER REVIEW IN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT. IN AUGUST 1 ISSUE NEW NIGERIAN PUT THIS STATEMENT IN MOUTH OF MOT DEPPERMSSEC FRANCIS OBI AND ALSO CITED RELIABLE SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT "AIRWAYS DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT" WITH TWA HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED

BECAUSE OF CERTAIN ISSUES THAT NEED "CLEARANCE" BUT THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN "REVOKED" AND MOT'S NEXT STEPS WOULD DEPEND ON ITS REVIEW OF TWA PROPOSALS.

3. WE HAD OCCASION IN JULY 16 MEETING WITH OBI TO REFER TO PRESS STORIES THEN CURRENT AND ASKED IF HE WISHED TO COMMENT ON THEM OR ON STATE OF PLAY WITH TWA. HIS REPLY
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THEN WAS FLAT "NO COMMENT."

4. COMMENT: ON BASIS INFO WE HAVE, WE ACCEPT THAT TWA PROPOSALS ARE STILL UNDER STUDY, AS PRESS AND OBI STATE. IN LIGHT OF NIGERIA AIRWAYS' OBVIOUS NEEDS AND INCREASING FOCUS ON THEM THERE SEEMS AT LEAST EVEN CHANCE THAT MOT STUDY MAY EVENTUATE IN PROPOSAL TO TWA, BUT WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT TERMS MOT MIGHT CONTEMPLATE AND THEIR APPEAL TO TWA.

5. ACTION: IF DEPARTMENT HAS OR CAN OBTAIN FROM TWA UP-TO-DATE INFO ON STATE OF PLAY AND IN PARTICULAR ON CURRENT TWA ATTITUDE TOWARD NIGERIA AIRWAYS' PROJECT, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. (TWA'S DONEGAN VISITED LAGOS LAST WEEK BUT HAD TO LEAVE WITHOUT KEEPING APPOINTMENT HE MADE WITH EMBASSY.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LAGOS06246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730862/aaaabtve.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <31-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIA AIRWAYS AND TWA
TAGS: ETRN, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005